

# For Our Youth.

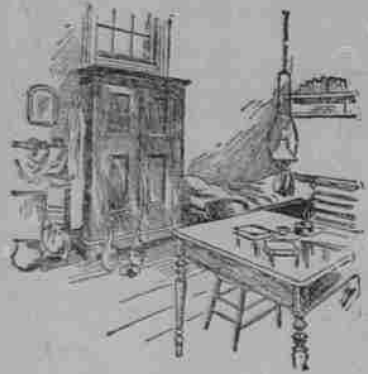
## PIEBE LIFE AT ANAPOLIS.

The Trials and Tribulations of a Boy's First Year at the United States Naval Academy.

It was certainly a very proud and happy moment for me when I gingerly opened the large stampless, official envelope of the navy department and read the formidable document inclosed, which was signed by "The Honorable the Secretary of the Navy" himself, and which directed me to report at the United States naval academy for examination as to my fitness for a "naval cadet."

I then and there became the most important personage in my small inland town, and my self-esteem, fed by the envious whisperings of my less fortunate schoolmates, rapidly assumed most abnormal and unpleasant proportions.

The shock was a great one, when, after my arrival at the naval academy,

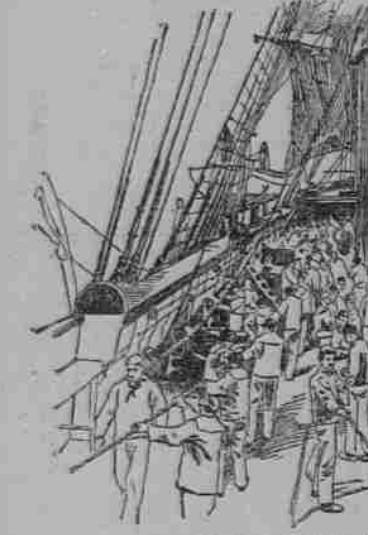


CADETS' ROOM.

emy. I discovered what a vast difference there really was between being the much envied future naval cadet in my own native town and one of a hundred poor, despised creatures at Annapolis known as "Piebes."

Biliously ignorant of my future status, I was rather surprised, then, on alighting at the dingy little station of Annapolis not to find a guard of marines drawn up to receive me, but reflected, as I made my way to the hotel, that perhaps they did not use the marines after dark.

Early the following morning I was aroused by the unceremonious entrance into my room of half a dozen youths, candidates like myself, who



CADETS ON U. S. STEAMER WYOMING.

apologized for their intrusion by explaining that they had heard of the arrival of a new candidate and thought, as long as we were to be future classmates, the sooner we knew each other, the better.

"Besides," added the spokesman, a tall, lanky, solemn youth, unmistakably from the south, "we thought you'd like to come with us and see the academy grounds and all. The cadets all left for their month's leave yesterday and this is the first chance we've had."

I did not see what the absence of the cadets had to do with the candidates' ability to view the grounds, but held my peace and joined the party.

A few minutes' walk through the picturequely dilapidated town of Annapolis, of whose inhabitants it is said: "They are too proud to live and not rich enough to die," brought us to the massive yellow wall which separates the government ground from the town.

As we entered through the broad gateway, with its trim, white-gloved marine guard, it was like passing into a new world.

Instead of hot red brick houses, ill-paved, dirty streets and ragged negroes, we found ourselves in a spacious, park-like enclosure, whose shaded, gravel walks and green lawns sweeping down to the water, made it seem in contrast with the stuffy town, a veritable Utopia.

We strolled aimlessly around the grounds; past Blake Row, with its



CANE DRILL EXERCISE.

sirry, comfortable houses for the married officers, past Stribbling Row, where the bachelor officers lodge, past the cadets' new quarters, with its tiers of windows and imposing clock tower; into the great armory, with its glittering array of cutlasses, rifles and howitzers; through the model room with its miniature ships of every kind and description—in fact we penetrated into every nook and cranny where our fancy led us.

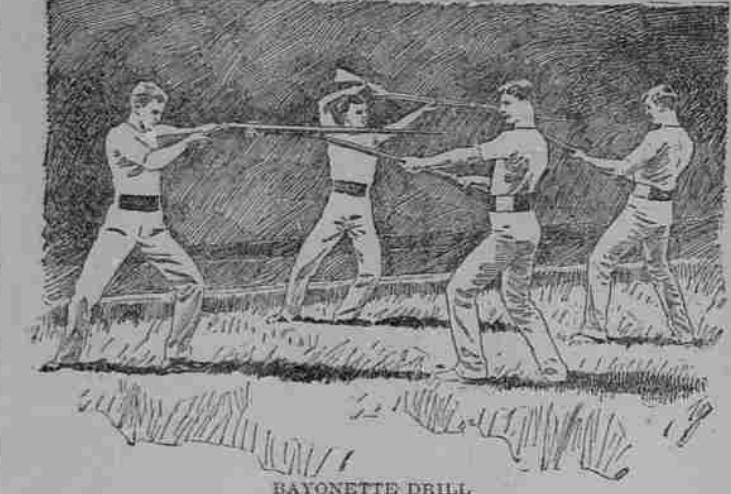
"This will be nice when the cadets all get back and the band starts up again," I commented, remarking to my southern friend, Jumpy (this name was Stenwall Jackson Jefferson Davis Jumper, but he was called "Jumpy" for short) as we strolled under the arch of "Love's Lane," past the deserted band stand.

"When the cadets get back?" queried Jumpy. "Why, yes, it will be so much livelier," I replied.

"Oh, yes! They'll make it lively enough for you," growled Jumpy, "but you won't be walking in Love's Lane then," he added.

"Why not?" I asked. "Why, because the upper classmen won't let you, because you don't rate it, because you'll only be a poor Piebe and because they'll 'run' you and 'haze' you so that you'll be glad enough to crawl into some hole and drag it in after you."

"But stop!" I exclaimed, "hazing was



BAYONETTE DRILL.

abolished long ago. Why, Congress even passed an act forbidding it, so, of course, they don't haze now?"

"Huh!" contemptuously grunted Jumpy. "If the true Congress passed that act, but after you've entered the academy you'll see how much hazing has been abolished!"

A terrible fear assailed my heart. I knew Jumpy must be telling the truth, for his brother had graduated but a short time before. My day was spoiled and I gloomily made my way back to the hotel and attempted to lose myself in examining for the examination which was to take place the middle of that month, September.

The fearful day arrived all too soon and for three days, in company with eighty others, I wrestled with the problems set before us by the board of examiners.

Half our number passed, myself in-

cluded, and after our physical examination we were sworn into the United States navy.

We were then mustered on board the Santee, an old-time wooden frigate used as a receiving ship, and told that for the next two weeks that was to be our home.

We were each given a hammock with instructions how to sling, lash and stow it, and by degrees, beginning with the cap, were fitted out with uniforms. And there were certainly enough of them. Eleven altogether, counting those for foot ball, base ball and tennis.

Hard work began immediately. From 6 o'clock in the morning until 10 at night, it seemed as though we did nothing but drill.

Ye gods! how my poor bones ached at night after this "setting up" drill. And the night was not the pleasantest part of the time, either, for it took a

great deal of practice, getting into and staying within those elusive hammocks on the gun deck of the old Santee.

It was a Friday, the last in September, that the order was given for us to move into the New Quarters, so after breakfast we packed our kits and marched with all our goods and chattels into the large, empty New Quarters.

Jumpy and I were to room together, and as we stowed our traps away in the neat little wardrobes, he remarked: "You better begin practicing standing on your head, for your friends, the cadets, return tomorrow and they'll expect you to amuse them."

Which remark was not at all calculated to calm my already harrowed feelings.

Sure enough, the following day the cadets began to straggle back.

In two's and three's and dozens they came by every train—in every style of costume and in every fashion of wearing whiskers known to man.

They paid no attention to the Piebes, but made for their own rooms, where amid their hilarious unpacking they confided to one another the number of girls they had become engaged to during their month's leave.

"I don't believe they'll trouble us, after all," I whispered to Jumpy.

"Wait," he said solemnly. "Just you wait until after supper."

Hardly had he spoken when the bugle call rang out for that meal and

we all scurried down into the main corridor, where the ranks were formed.

What a change from the straggling, bewildered crowd of the day! In its place was a long line of some two hundred young men, each with a smooth-shaven face and each clad in the most shaven face and each clad in the trimmest of snug fitting blue fatigue uniforms.

The cadet officers stepped to the front, the roll was called and we marched into the great mess hall with its long rows of white clothed tables. Each cadet stood motionless behind his chair.

"Seats," cried the cadet lieutenant commander.

An awful scraping of the chairs and these seats were taken. Then what a babel of voices and clatter of dishes arose.

Around and around rushed the dark-eyed waiters in a mad endeavor to serve the apparently famished cadets. At a small table near the end of the hall sat the "officer in charge" (the

lone commissioned naval officer who has charge of the new quarters) in company with the three highest cadet officers, who beamed benignly on the noisy crew about them.

Awed by the terrific racket and the presence of so many upper classmen, I did not make much of a meal and was glad enough when the order was given to march out.

Jumpy and I made straight for our room, where we hoped in a measure to escape observation.

It was a vain hope, however, for gradually the sounds of rioting along the corridors grew louder and presently our door banged open and half a dozen upper classmen burst into the room.

"Up you come, you blessed Piebe! Heels together, fins out and cap in hand! Don't you know enough to stand at attention when upper classmen honor you with a visit?" bellowed the smallest of the party. "Say, what's your name, Mister?" cried another to Jumpy.

"Jumper," replied my solemn room mate.

"Jumper what? Don't you save enough to put on a 'sir'?" It's best you learned now, spell your full name out, with 'sir' after each letter. After poor Stenwall Jackson Jefferson Davis Jumper had obeyed this order, the upper classman added: "Perhaps you'll remember now, when you speak to a superior, to use enough 'sirs'."

"What are you smiling about, Mister Piebe?" he cried fiercely, turning to me. "Wipe that grin off of your face or I'll stand you on your head, for such a time you'll think you grew there!"

And so it went on until "taps" sounded. Party after party would burst into the room; up we would jump at "attention," and listen to their railings, never daring to speak unless to answer a direct question, and then only with all the brevity and respectfulness possible.

In the last crowd to visit us was an upper classman who had sat opposite me during supper.

"Mister Piebe, you are very gaudy," he said; "I saw you drinking milk tonight and you know Piebes don't rate that. Now just suppose you 'invert' yourself; it may tend to give you a rush of brains to the head, which will perhaps help you to remember what a Piebe rates and what he doesn't."

There was no help for it, so up I got and with heels scraping against the wall, stood on my head for about three minutes. This "inversion" seemed to be a most popular form of amusement with most of the upper classmen.

"There, that's enough. Now get down," said my tormentor. "And while I'm here, my gaudy friend, I'll tell you a few of the things a Piebe does not rate, and if I ever catch you doing any one of them, you'll do the 'inversion' until your head is sore. You do not rate drinking milk, going to the hops, walking in any walk save the main one, speaking before you are spoken to, wearing your cap on the side of your head or insisting in other frivolities. Now would you like

to ask any questions? Well, fire ahead."

"Sir," I replied, "will you kindly tell me what I can do?"

"Yes," answered the upper classman, slowly. "I will. You can be thankful for being allowed to live at all—bye-bye, Piebe!"

"Look here, Jumpy, this is horrible," I said after taps were sounded and we were left in peace. "I am not going to stand it."

"What are you going to do?" said Jumpy.

"Fight!" said I.

"Well, I wish you joy of it," replied Jumpy. "They'll be fair enough to you, selecting a man of your own weight and age. If you lick him, then when you are rested, you will have to fight another man and so on through all the upper classes. After you've licked them all you needn't take any more hazing, but not until then."

"Jumpy," said I, after a long pause, "I don't think I'll fight after all."

After the academic year began, the first of October, the upper classmen did not have so much time to spare for hazing, but they never allowed a Piebe to forget that he was a Piebe and to govern himself accordingly.

The hazing, however, was not of the brutal kind that is so often heard of at the colleges. Violent hands were never laid upon a Piebe; if he refused to do what an upper classman told him, a fight followed, a fight as pun-

tilious in all respects as the ancient duels or the more modern prize fight, with challengers, backers, seconds and all the modern improvements. But a Piebe had rarely more than one fight, he invariably decided he would rather take the hazing.

The daily life at the academy was monotonous in the extreme. Reveille at 6 a. m., breakfast at 6:30. Then half an hour for sweeping the rooms and making the beds, which is all done by the cadets. Studies began at 8 and lasted until 4 p. m., with an hour's intermission for dinner. Drills are from 4 to 6, and study hour from 7:30 to 9:30, with "taps"—all lights out at 10 o'clock.

A hard day's work, but a day's work which puts brawn on the body and brains in the head.

Of all the drills, and there were many, the one most to my liking was "seamanship" on board the Wyoming.

Three or four times a month the entire corps of cadets, in white working clothes, would be mustered on board the ancient man of war; divisions would be formed, and we would spend a day sailing about Chesapeake Bay, wearing seamanship.

The cadets of the First class would act as commissioned officers, and the Second, Third and Fourth classes would constitute the petty officers and crew.

It was all very nice playing sailor on warm, pleasant days, but I never could get over a certain inward quail while laying out along the main royal yard on a squally day, sail snapping in the wind while the pitching, seething water seemed to be miles beneath me.

The bayonet and cane drills were also favorites with us, on account of the opportunity for individual powers. The exercise is one of the most picturesque and useful in the course, its object is primarily to enable officers to defend themselves with canes. Incidentally it hardens the muscles and teaches quickness of thought and action to an extent not found in any other drill.

After a few preliminary duels, in which each man tries to crack his opponent's head, three or four cadets are chosen to withstand an attack from a dozen or so of their fellows.

The four stand back to back, their sticks grasped firmly in their gloved hands, and await the onslaught.

On come the whoops and howls, and the sticks clashing together play a fierce game against each other like the rattle of gigantic canes.

The four are rarely defeated, for with their lightning strokes and parries they form an effective circle which it is almost impossible to penetrate.

The utility of this drill has been proven many a time in foreign ports, where, hated, unarmed naval officers, set up by a crowd of roughs, have defended themselves until assistance arrived, simply by forming the old naval academy phalanx, and playing a merry tag on the pates of those who beset them.

We Piebes hailed drill time with delight, for apart from the interest we naturally took in the different exercises, it brought us immunity from the hazing.

Towards the end of the term, however, about May, the hazing decreased, and as the candidates for the next Fourth class appeared, it ceased entirely. Then our turn began, and we gleefully gloated over the unfortunate who were soon to fall into our hands.

At last graduating day came, with its pretty girls, officials, Congressmen and general rejoicings.

The graduates received their diplomas from the secretary of the navy, each class moved up a step, and Jumpy and I, with the rest of our fellows, from being poor miserable Piebes, became full-fledged upper classmen, with the delightful anticipation of spending the ensuing three months cruising along the Atlantic coast on the Constellation, with a shipful of freshly-caught green piebes upon whom we could pay off our old scores! STEVENS VAIL.

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